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ABSTRACT

This evaluative booklist of historical literature for children in grades K-8 includes fiction set in America from the earliest settlers to 1812. The list focuses on books about this period featuring women as the main characters. Criteria for selection included credibility of the main character and whether her roles were realistic or stereotyped. The technique of each work was also considered, and stereotyping indicated under the rubrics "The Two-suitor Syndrome," "Destined from the Cradle," or "The Converted Tomboy." Each book was rated as R (recommended), NR (not recommended), or WR (recommended with reservations). (AP)

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Tea & Muskets

a bicentennial booklist

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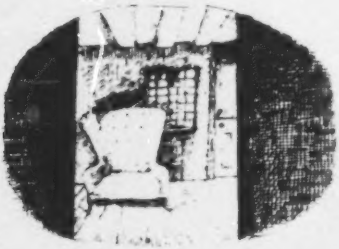

Introduction

I. Rationale

We are a group of children's librarians active in the Boston Area Women in Libraries who felt the lack of an evaluative Bicentennial booklist to fulfill our bibliographic needs. In order to find the materials which we could recommend to librarians and children we sought books which were historically sound and characterized by realistic portrayals of women and men in all their dimensions.

II. Criteria for inclusion

Our survey includes fiction for children, grades K – 8, set in America, from the earliest settlers up to 1812.

Because of time limitations, the abundance of materials, and the dearth of good books featuring women as main characters, we felt it was important to select and evaluate those books which represented women in primary roles. We realize that we have missed some, including many fine books with women in secondary roles.

III. Evaluation

Each book was read by at least one of us, and discussed collectively. If necessary, books were re-read before a final decision was made. During the review process, we especially examined several factors:

Is the main character credible and genuinely motivated? Is she static or dynamic in development? Does her romantic interest propel the plot?

Are the roles of other personae consistent, honest, and unstereotyped?

Does the book reinforce prejudices overtly or by ignoring the roles of some groups? Especially to be noted were portrayals of Indians, Blacks, socio-economic classes, and jingoisitic attitudes.

Consider technique: style, plot, overall characterizations, and blending of accurate historical detail.

IV. Common stereotypes

Unfortunately, we found that much of the available material fit into one or more of three prevalent molds, which we noted with the following symbols:

"The Two-suitor Syndrome": The historical plot is relegated to the romantic realm, as the heroine, possessed of insight and initiative is transformed into a confused, coy female, unable to decide between two polarized romantic figures. One suitor is generally familiar and homey; the other is foreign and dashing. The heroine invariably ends up married or engaged, her future secure.

"Destined from the Cradle": Hardly any of the books neglected this kind of stereotyping. The heroine is characterized as possessing some "innate", traditionally feminine trait, usually as some kind of caretaker – a born teacher, nurse, mother, etc.

"The Converted Tomboy": The heroine begins the story as an energetic, independent individual, unencumbered by the dictates of her limiting social role. By the end, she has learned to like and accept these dictates and the rewards, i.e. marriage and/or maternity. She becomes passive, modest, soft-spoken, and subservient.

V. Ratings

R = recommended
NR = not recommended
WR = with reservations (its flaws are compensated by some other feature)

VI. Sources

In addition to reading the shelves of various public library collections, we consulted:

Logosa, Hannah. **Historical Fiction**
Metzner, Seymour. **American History in Juvenile Books.** Wilson, 1966.
Sutherland, Zena. **History in Children's Books.** McKinley, 1967.

ALBRECHT, Lillie

Spinning Wheel Secret
1600's – Hatfield, Massachusetts

gr. 4-6

1965 Hastings $3.99

Jo, a tomboy, goes to live with another family when her mother is captured by Indians. She learns the "womanly" duties she neglected before, thus accepting her prescribed role. In contrast, her bold and adventurous brothers make her seem pallid. NR

ALBRECHT, Lillie

Susanna's Candlestick
1663 – Connecticut River Valley

gr. 4-6

1970 Hastings $4.44

Susanna is orphaned and thrown on her own resources – but passive Susanna always finds a man to rescue her. Her only talent seems to be working with children, and in all areas there is a strong differentiation between men and women's work. Comes complete with stereotyped gypsy. NR

BEYER, Audrey

Katharine Leslie
pre-Rev. – Maine

gr. 6 & up

1963 Knopf $4.99

A romance set against the backdrop of Tory-Rebel conflicts. All the heroine's actions are reactions to male opinion, her beliefs dictated by love instead of reason. Promotes the sexual dichotomy relegating men to a work obsession and women to selfless devotion to home and the welfare of unfortunates. NR

BOUTWELL, Edna

Daughter of Liberty
1773-1776 – Boston, Massachusetts

gr. 4-6

1967 Collins-World $4.91

An attractively set out but disappointing book. Characterization shallow and abrupt; Amy is just a vehicle for narrating events. Sexist stereotypes are consistently reinforced and many potentially strong situations for Amy are vitiated by misguided truisms or the arrival of men. Interesting historical detail not enough to redeem it. NR

BRADBURY, Bianca

Goodness and Mercy Jenkins
1670's – New Haven, Connecticut gr. 6 & up

1963 Washburn OP

Mercy, rebellious to Puritan ways, is both outspoken and spunky, but these qualities are overshadowed by the stereotyping rampant throughout. Her motivations are based on "the heart" and an illogical relationship with a young man. Other women are motherly or mousy; other men are either tyrants or condescending. NR

see also: Denker, Nan — Bound Girl
Lenski, Lois — Puritan Adventure
Speare, Elizabeth — Witch of Blackbird Pond
Field, Rachel — Calico Bush

BULLA, Clyde

Pocahantas and the Strangers
1617 – Jamestown, Virginia gr. 5 & up

1971 Crowell $4.59

An unsympathetic portrayal of Pocahantas, in spite of her superficial generosity. She shows little loyalty to her own people, and Indian/settler rivalry is consistently reinforced. NR

BUTTERS, Dorothy

Ten Leagues To Boston Town
1750 – Massachusetts gr. 6 & up

1962 Macrae Smith OP

Deborah and her brother take a dangerous ride to see their sick father. Style is wooden, plot contrived, and character development minimal. Deborah is a flirt who learns only how to fulfill her subservient role as a woman. The Indian, although a hero, just grunts and babbles. Other women are caretakers or competitors, while the men are clever and courageous. NR

BUTTERS, Dorothy

Witch's Silver
1703 – Boston, Massachusetts gr. 6 & up

1959 Macrae Smith OP

Arabella undertakes a dangerous journey to recover her family silver. She is so physically, emotionally, and intellectually strong that she is an unrealistic character. Other women are wives or flirts, and the men are superficial (heroes or cowards). Suffers from "heroine must choose between two men and end married" syndrome. NR

CAUDILL, Rebecca

The Far-Off Land
1780's – Frontier — gr. 6 & up

1964 Viking $4.95

Ketty leaves a peaceful Moravian settlement to make a dangerous journey west with her brothers and families. The other women are harsh echoes of their pioneer husbands, whereas Ketty is maternal and civilizing – a "born teacher". Extremely anti-Indian, and even the danger and romance fail to make the book exciting. NR

CAVANNA, Betty

Ruffles and Drums, ill. Richard Cuffari
1775-1776 – Concord, Massachusetts — gr. 5 & up

1975 Wm Morrow $5.11

Potentially interesting story of Sarah Kent and her mother, who nurse a wounded British soldier back to health. Sarah doesn't really **do** anything, except choose between the boy-next-door and the handsome foreigner. The men are generally condescending, although Mrs. Kent is very competent. Historical details good, but sacrificed to a worn-out plot. NR

CAVANNA, Betty

A Touch of Magic
1776-1804 – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania — gr. 6 & up

1961 Westminster Press $4.95

Hannah and her mother are Quakers, employed as seamstresses to society ladies, in particular, the Shippen family. Despite some attempt to describe the disparity between rich and poor, the social analysis and characterization are simplistic. Hannah, a "born nurse" finds happiness through her man. Peggy Shippen, who married Benedict Arnold, is romantically, if unhistorically portrayed. NR

CHENEY, Cora

The Incredible Deborah,
a story based on the life of Deborah Sampson
1765-1780's – Massachusetts — gr. 6 & up

1967 Charles Scribners OP

Fascinating and well-researched story of Deborah Sampson, who served as a soldier in the Continental Army for nearly two years, disguised as a boy. Deborah's motivations are carefully explored – she is intelligent, and restless within the limitations of her 18th century role. Other women are mostly domestic models, but there is realistic interaction with the heroine. That men live exciting lives inspires Deborah to fill her true potential. Lots of history, photos, facsimiles included. R

see also McGovern, Ann The Secret Soldier
Sinister, Florence Girl with a Musket

CLAPP, Patricia

Constance: A Story of Early Plymouth
1620-1626 – Plymouth, Massachusetts — gr. 5 & up

1968 Lothrop $5.11

Journal of an intelligent and resourceful 15-yr. old girl lends immediacy to the well-researched historical material. It is marred by superficial male and female characters, and the author's reliance on the "two suitor" syndrome. WR

CLARKE, Mary

The Iron Peacock
1650 – Saugus, Massachusetts — gr. 5 & up

1976 Viking OP

The author's knowledge of the Saugus iron works is skillfully blended into this story. Although the heroine isn't an especially strong character, she does show growth. The variety of roles for both sexes reflect the work men and women had to share in a new settlement. The problems of native Americans trying to maintain their culture in the midst of a white society is well depicted. R

CLARKE, Mary

The Limner's Daughter
1804 – Woburn, Massachusetts — gr. 6 & up

1967 Viking $3.95

Exciting story of a resourceful young woman who, through determination, ingenuity and strength of character single-handly pulls her family through a series of crises. Meticulously researched and eloquently written, the author deftly draws several interesting female characters from a variety of economic groups. The heroine's father is a rare character – a pacifist and man of great emotional sensitivity. R

CLARKE, Mary

Petticoat Rebel
1744 – Gloucester, Massachusetts — gr. 6 & up

1964 Viking OP

Although Dacré achieves her goal of equal educational opportunities for girls, and even goes on to open her own school, the story is contrived and condescending in its attitudes towards women and blacks. Dacré, a "born teacher", is too good to be true. Strong on plot and history, but lacking in original characterization. WR

COLVER, Ann

Bread and Butter Indian, ill. Garth Williams
1783 – Pennsylvania gr. 2-5

1964 Holt R & W $3.97

Despite hostile relations between settlers and Indians, 8 yr. old Barbara secretly befriends an older Indian man. This friendship, and her own observations of an Indian camp when kidnapped overcomes the pervasive stereotypes about Indians and their society. A thoughtful book and an observant, believable heroine. R

COLVER, Ann

Bread and Butter Journey
1780's – Pennsylvania gr. 2-5

1970 HR & W $4.95

Despite interesting historical details, this is less successful than above. During a journey made by two older women and four children, only the boy stands out as a colorful character and leader. WR

CURTIS, Alice

A Little Maid of Nantucket
1779 – Nantucket, Massachusetts gr. 4-5

1950 Knopf OP

Includes some interesting details, but style is so choppy and insipid that the book is not worth wading through. The heroine is a super person and defies belief; all other characters can be accurately labeled from the moment they appear. Part of the **Little Maid** Series. NR

DALGLIESH, Alice

The Courage of Sarah Noble, ill. Leonard Weisgard
1707 – Connecticut gr. 1-4

1954 Charles Scribners $5.95

8 yr. old Sarah accompanies her father into the wilderness and stays, by herself, with an Indian family. Sarah is courageous, although afraid of the unknown, and thus believable. Her relationship with her father is warm and affectionate. While Sarah's father trusts the Indians, her mother's reaction, and Sarah's condescending attitude could be used to stimulate discussion. Based on fact. R

DeANGELI, Marguerite

Elin's America
1648 – New Sweden gr. 4-6
1941 Doubleday $3.50

Although well-designed and attractively illustrated, sexism and racism pervade the story of Elin's adjustment to her home in the new world. There is a sharp delineation of sex roles, as well as the perception that to be an Indian would be undesirable. NR

DENKER, Nan

Bound Girl
1712-1715 – New England gr. 5 & up
1957 Farrar OP

13 yr. old Felicié, a French orphan bound out to the Todd family, finds it difficult to adjust to the plain and demanding Puritan life. Accustomed to affluence, she is the ideal female – clothes, marriage, and maternity have high priority. Men are mean or benevolent; other women, denied frivolities, turn sour. NR

see also Bradbury, Bianca — Goodness and Mercy Jenkins
Lenski, Lois — Puritan Adventure
Speare, Elizabeth — Witch of Blackbird Pond
Field, Rachel — Calico Bush

EDWARDS, Sally

When the World's On Fire, ill. Richard LeBenson
1780 – Charlestown, North Carolina gr. 3-6
1972 Coward $5.95

Well written and sensitively illustrated story of a 9 yr. old black girl offers interesting new perspectives on the Revolution. Annie is one of those rare heroines with a realistic balance of spirit and good sense. She resolves problems pragmatically and confidently, without compromising herself. She is supported by Maum Kate, a black leader and conjur woman, who is the center of a fascinating black population. R

ELIOT, Anne

Dorie of Dogtown Common
1770's – Cape Ann, Massachusetts gr. 4-6
1962 Abingdon OP

Dorie is an independent, resourceful young girl sent to live with her grandfather's friend "Gran" in Dogtown. The town is predominately female, with many interesting characters. Gran is also a strong character, competent in dealing with the details of colonial life, which are artfully woven in amidst a plot of intrigue. Fast moving action coupled with Dorie's courage and cleverness make for an interesting and realistic story. R

EMERY, Anne

Carey's Fortune
1800 – Annapolis gr. 6 & up

1969 Westminster $3.95

A loser. The heroine stands, sponge-like, ready to absorb anyone's opinions, and even her view of herself is trite. Plot and other characterizations follow suit. NR

EVATT, Harriet

An Army In Pigtails, ill. by author
1812 – Scituate, Massachusetts gr. 2-4

1962 Bobbs-Merrill

Based on a true incident, this is the story of Rebecca and Abigail Bates who learn to play the fife and drum. Because they have played soldier as well as house, they are able to fool British soldiers into a retreat, saving the village from confrontation. Easy to read, nicely written with humor and good historical background. R

see also Hall, Marjory Drumbeat on the Shore

FAULKNER, Nancy

Journey Into Danger
1777 – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania gr. 6 & up

1966 Doubleday OP

A prosaic story of 15 yr. old Deborah, who flees her evil aunt to live with a peaceful Quaker family. Although she becomes involved in spying for George Washington's Army, she is timorous by nature, motivated only partly by politics and mostly by romance. NR

FAULKNER, Nancy

Undecided Heart
1770's – New England gr. 6 & up

1957 (1969) Doubleday $1.98

New England was an uneasy place for a Tory family, and even sheltered Drucilla could not avoid the conflict. Dru's reasoning facilities are taken lightly as she bounces from one "conviction" to the next. Other women are similarly weak-willed, while men are purposeful and motivated. Blacks are regarded kindly, if condescendingly. Fluid of style, but predictable and stereotyped. NR

FIELD, Rachel

Calico Bush
1743 – Maine gr. 6 & up

1931 (1966) Macmillan $4.95

Despite some decent writing and characterization, heavy handed sexism and racism override the story. Maggie, a French girl bound out to a hard-working American family, fulfills all the typical demands of "femininity". Indians are presented as murderous and savage. NR

see also
Bradbury, Bianca
Denker, Nan
Lenski, Lois
Speare, Elizabeth
Goodness and Mercy Jenkins
Bound Girl
Puritan adventure
Witch of Blackbird Pond

FINLAYSON, Ann

Rebecca's War
1777 – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania gr. 5 & up

1972 Warne $4.95

Incorporates many interesting details of life in an occupied city into an exciting story. Rebecca, the heroine, and the only female character with any depth is a clever and resourceful girl who succeeds in several dangerous endeavors, yet remains appealingly human. Her relationship with a wealthy British officer illustrates the complexity and ambivalence inherent in fighting a war with a "civilized" and amicable enemy. Muddy illustrations. R

FRITZ, Jean

The Cabin Faced West
1782 – Pennsylvania gr. 4-6

1958 Coward $5.95

10 yr. old Ann has difficulty accepting her family's move west, but comes to love the new home. George Washington's visit and praise of her pioneering spirit crystallizes her sense of self worth. She is likeable, active, courageous and capable of growth. Despite sharp division of labor in the family and glorification of GW the book is well-plotted and worthwhile. Based on fact. R

GAUCH, Patricia

This Time, Tempe Wick?, ill. Margot Tomes
1780-1781 – Jockey Hollow, New Jersey gr. 2-5

1974 Coward (new ed.) $6.95

One of our favorites. Tempe is a strong, likeable young woman who uses her wits to save her horse from mutinous soldiers. Although she is stronger and more clever than most she is never overdrawn and remains believable throughout. Style is good, history well blended. R

HALL, Marjory

Another Kind of Courage
1778 – Frontier
gr. 6 & up

1967 Westminster OP

Centered on her daughter Sukey, this story negates Nancy Hart's courage and unorthodoxy by suggesting that Sukey's domestic passivity is more desirable. However, the characters are varied, including a dreamy, intellectual father and Sukey grows in understanding and accepting that variety. Sukey's fears of Indians seems astounding, given her mother's empathy for Indian culture. WR

HALL, Marjory

Drumbeat on the Shore
1812 – Scituate, Massachusetts
gr. 6 & up

1965 Westminster $3.50

The focus of this retelling of the Bates sisters is romance, not history, which is poorly blended. Portrayed as teenagers, Nabby and Becky are motivated solely by mindless "love". The rest of the family is supposedly "independent, active and interesting" but the book fails to substantiate the claim. NR

see also Evatt, Harriet An Army In Pigtails

HALL, Marjory

See the Red Sky
1777 – New York
gr. 6 & up

1963 Westminster $3.95

Sybil Ludington's historic 40 mile ride to warn militiamen of a British attack is reduced of heroic significance. Men are active fighters, women cheerful homemakers. Sybil's father is idolized, her sister is courageous only when "blinded" by love. Sybil's own restlessness is dispelling her growing love for Chris, making the ride itself anti-climactic. Truly a disappointment. NR

HAYS, Wilma

Mary's Star, a Tale of Orphans in Virginia
1781 – Virginia gr. 4-7

1968 HR & W $3.95

When Mary is orphaned by the Revolution, the plantation on which she had lived passes into the hands of a cruel new owner along with her colt, Star. Her friend, Deke, is also affected. Through ingenuity and persistence, Mary retrieves Star and helps relocate Deke. Other characters are, for the most part, monochromatic. Nonetheless, it is fast moving and enjoyable. WR

HAYS, Wilma

May Day for Samoset
1622 – Maine gr. 3-5

1968 Coward OP

The underpinnings of the slight plot center around the hackneyed theme of "generosity is giving a treasure in spite of oneself." The author ignores potentially fascinating details of domestic colonial life, concentrating instead on the heroine's preparation of a May day basket. NR

HOLBERG, Ruth

Girl in the Witch House
1770's – Cape Ann, Massachusetts gr. 4-6

1966 Hastings House $4.50

A spunky heroine who overcomes social ostracism because her sister is considered a witch. Her adventures are appealing, but her strength is compromised by a wavering self-confidence, excessive love of domesticity and an acceptance of romance unrealistically portrayed. WR

KATZ, Bernard & Jonathan

Black Woman
1735-1821 – Massachusetts gr. 6 & up

1973 Pantheon $5.97

An inspiring story of a strong black woman of courage, intelligence and principles. Her character is developed logically and her situation is presented realistically in a well-written, easy to read format. The other characters are fascinating as individuals and give one a feeling of the immense variety of political and social forces operating at the time. R

LAWRENCE, Mildred

Indigo Magic
1767 – Florida gr. 5-6

1956 Harcourt OP

Noteworthy for its unusual setting, this is the story of Susanna who yearns for a playmate. She has some exciting adventures while accompanying her botanist father as an artist, demonstrates her courage, and becomes genuinely intrigued by the indigo process. Despite a somewhat contrived plot and set of characters, the lack of romance and the development of Susanna as an individual makes this a welcome relief. R

LAWRENCE, Mildred

Touchmark, ill. Deanne Hollinger
1773 – Boston, Massachusetts gr. 5 & up

1975 Harcourt $7.50

Denied the opportunity to become a pewterer because it is a "man's profession", Nabby refuses to accept 18th century limitations, and pursues her goal with an admirable combination of determination, intelligence, humor, and creativity. Distracted by politics, Nabby also gets involved with the exciting events around her. Besides much information on pewtering, one gets a solid view of colonial life in this rousing story, seen through Nabby's sharp and perceptive eyes. R

LENSKI, Lois

Puritan Adventure
1635 – Massachusetts gr. 4-6

1944 Lippincott $4.82

Young Widow Charity brings modish London customs to the Puritan world. Not without a struggle, she is accepted by the community for her good will and deeds. Charity is admirable for her courage, persistence and joie de vivre, but the contrast between her vivacity and the Puritan asceticism is so pronounced as to make her seem saccarine. Men are uncompromisingly strict, while women easily regress into worldly habits. Still, it's a convincing sketch of daily Puritan life, with an enjoyable central figure.

see also: Bradbury, Bianca — Goodness and Mercy Jenkins
Deriker, Nan — Bound Girl
Field, Rachel — Calico Bush
Speare, Elizabeth — Witch of Blackbird Pond

LOWRY, Janet

Six Silver Spoons, ill. Robert Quakenbush
1775 – Boston, Massachusetts gr. 1-2

1971 Harper $2.95

Debby is a particularly bland character, ready to burst into tears when things go wrong, while her brother does not waver in self-confidence. Unfortunately, "I-Can-Read" format fails to compensate for poor characterization. NR

McGOVERN, Ann

The Secret Soldier, ill. Ann Grifalconi
1765-1820's – New England gr. 2-5

1975 Four Winds $5.95

A valuable account of Deborah Sampson who, disguised as a boy, fought in the Continental Army for nearly 2 years. We follow Deborah from childhood to young adulthood parellelling the young nation's fight for freedom with Deborah's own desire for independence. She becomes a resourceful and courageous soldier and, once discharged, continues to defy convention by traveling and lecturing. Her determination and success more than likely to inspire. R

see also Cheney, Cora — The Incredible Deborah
Sinister, Florence — Girl with a Musket

MINSHULL, Evelyn

The Dune Witch
1600's – Massachusetts gr. 4-6

1972 Westminster $4.95; Lg. Print G. K. Hall $8.95

Priss is an unlikely heroine, befriending "good" people from instinct, while she tries to fight prejudice and hysteria with cliches. Women are sometimes strong, but not nearly as heroic as Priss's brother or "friend" Bengy, who protects her as she flirts with him. Poorly developed plot and dialogue. NR

MONJO, Ferdinand

Grandpapa and Ellen Aroon
1790's – Washington, D.C. gr. 1-5

1974 HR & W $5.50

Although a well written, historically accurate account, this is Thomas Jefferson's story, not Ellen Aroon's. TJ is fascinating, but Ellen is a pale figure. Although Ellen is intelligent, exciting things mostly happen to her brother. A good book marred by uninspired female characterization. WR

MONJO, Ferdinand

Secret of Sachem's Tree, ill. Margot Tomes
1687 – Hartford, Connecticut gr. 2-4

1972 Coward $4.69.

The boys and girls that serve as the vehicle for recounting an historic incident are undeveloped and stereotyped. Lack of character development drains vitality from the entire story. A "Break-of-Day" book. NR

MOSKIN, Marietta

Lysbet and the Fire Kittens, ill. Margot Tomes
1662 – New Amsterdam gr. 1-4

1973 Coward $4.49

8 yr. old Lysbet is left in charge of the house overnight when her mother leaves unexpectedly. She makes a valiant effort to live up to her responsibilities, but forgets to mind the fire as she goes off to celebrate Skating Day. Appealing, well-illustrated, and nicely written. A "Break-of-Day" book. R

O'DANIEL, Janet

Garrett's Crossing
1778 – Mohawk Valley, New York gr. 6 & up

1968 Lippincott $4.50

Despite her hard life as a pioneer, Lizzie, who starts off as assistant to a traveling seamstress, is a durable, independent character. She is surrounded by strong women – Ada, her boss; the two women of the Garrett family with whom she stays for a while. The men are also varied – sometimes coping, sometimes gentle. The Garretts are Tories, which adds political intrigue to this sensitively drawn story. R

PETRY, Ann

Tituba of Salem Village
1690's – Salem, Massachusetts gr. 6 & up

1964 Crowell $4.95

An excellent rendition of witchcraft in Salem. Personalities and motivation, class and social problems, are carefully analyzed. Tituba is a sympathetic and admirable character, as is her sensitive husband. Especially noteworthy is the portrayal of women being supportive of other women. Authentic and dramatic reading. Based on fact. R

POPE, Elizabeth Marie

Sherwood Ring
Revolution – Orange County, New York gr. 6 & up

1958 Houghton Mifflin $4.50

This revolutionary scenario is revealed to a contemporary female by ghostly flashbacks of several strongly individualistic women. The plot hinges on a band of Tory marauders, but the strongest protagonists are women who outsmart their adversaries. Well written despite a misty romantic ending. R

SAVAGE, Josephine

Daughter of Delaware
1776 – America and France gr. 6 & up

1964 John Day OP

Polly goes to France to solicit aid from the government, especially Marie Antoinette (portrayed as kind and generous). Preposterous and misleading history badly blended with Polly's involvement in a love triangle. NR

SAVAGE, Josephine

Gunpowder Girl
1775 – Boston, Massachusetts gr. 6 & up

1958 John Day OP

Susanna Ellis's mother is the only woman silversmith in the colonies as well as being a chemist. When the British refuse to let gunpowder be imported, Mrs. Ellis sets up a dangerous manufacturing plant with her children's aid. Although Susannah is brave, only her mother's activities lend excitement and strength to the book. WR

SIMISTER, Florence

Girl with a Musket, ill. Lloyd Coe
1770's – New England gr. 4-6

1959 Hastings OP

Deborah Sampson's dramatic story, ridiculously cloaked in fictionalized incident and romance. Patriotism is given high priority; pacifism shown as shameful. Deborah (here named Anne) ends up with the boy-next-door, and her "soldiering" is mostly concerned with having a crush on a young man, and cooking for the captain. NR

see also: Cheney, Cora — The Incredible Deborah
McGovern, Ann — The Secret Soldier

SPEARE, Elizabeth

Calico Captive
1754 – New Hampshire & Montreal gr. 6 & up

1957 Houghton $4.95

Miriam and her family are abducted by Indians from their frontier home and taken to Montreal to be separated and sold. Miriam is plausible if not laudable, though like other characters she is one-dimensional. Only sister Susanna has strength and independence; men are all distinguished by their convictions and deeds. Miriam regards Indians as savages, although she has lived with them. Entertaining but predictable. WR

SPEARE, Elizabeth

Witch of Blackbird Pond
1687 – Connecticut gr. F & up

1958 Houghton $4.95

Kit leaves her affluent Barbados home to live with her Puritan cousins. She adjusts to the new way of life despite her personal conflicts. Kit's relationship with the family, the seaman Nat, and the Puritan community mature realistically. Other characters are well-developed: Aunt Rachel and Hannah, the "witch" stand out. Men have strength as well as fallibility. Fluently written, historically consistent, and absorbing. Newberry Award Winner. R

see also: Bradbury, Bianca — Goodness and Mercy Jenkins
Denker, Nan — Bound Girl
Field, Rachel — Calico Bush
Lenski, Lois — Puritan Adventure

VAN WOERKOM, Dorothy

Becky and the Bear, ill. Margot Tomes
1600's – Maine gr. 1-3

1975 Putnam $4.69

In this easy to read book interesting details of colonial farm life are incorporated into the exciting story of Becky, a spirited girl whose ingenuity in capturing a bear accomplishes more than hunters' guns and proves that girls can indeed be brave. Delightful color illustrations. R

WATSON, Sally

Hornet's Nest
1773 – Virginia gr. 5 & up

1968 Holt $4.50

A Scotish girl and her brother becomes involved with the American fight against England. The heroine is extra-ordinary in her courage, talents, looks, etc. Plot and character development are also flawed, yet it is still exciting and adventurous reading. WR

YERBY, Frank

Bride of Liberty
1774 – New York and Boston gr. 6 & up

1954 Doubleday OP (Pyramid Publ. (Paper) $.75

Stylistically trite, flat of characterization, and suffering from two-suitor syndrome, this books provides vivid historical detail but lacks literary merit. NR